



# PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

## Report to the 2009 Annual Town Meeting

---

### A. Committee charge (in part):

"To evaluate the town's road, sidewalk, drainage, and traffic circulation and to recommend priorities for their maintenance, repair, extension, and reconstruction".

### B. Streets:

Amherst's roads remain in seriously deteriorated condition, due to the increasing gap between the cost of maintenance and repair and the funds available to pay for it. Specifically, Chapter 90 appropriations (street repair reimbursements from the state) have remained level while the cost of asphalt (a petroleum product) increases more often than not. Furthermore, the budget and manpower resources of the DPW have become too thin to adequately patch holes or do annual crack sealing – activities that greatly extend the life of a street surface.

In the hope of "catching up" on the backlog, the Public Works Committee collaborated with the Superintendent of Public Works in compiling a list of road repair projects that, given sufficient funding, could be completed over a two-year period. The list, which carried an estimated price tag of \$4.8 million, was submitted to the Select Board during the winter for consideration of possible funding sources. It was hoped that the list would qualify for federal infrastructure "stimulus" money, but to date that has not occurred. Alternatively, the list could be packaged for bonding by the town or a debt exclusion override.

The committee bases its recommendations for street repair on information contained in the DPW's pavement management inventory of the condition of all town roads supplemented by advice from Superintendent Guilford Mooring and personal observation and experience of committee members. Chapter 90 funding, which comes in the form of reimbursements by the state, is approximately \$600,000 and may not be used for other elements of the Town's – or even the Department's – budget. The committee has established a policy of prioritizing arterial roadways over neighborhood side streets, given the rising cost of paving materials and traffic flow/traffic calming considerations that are impacted by road conditions. Where needed, the committee recommends that adjacent sidewalks be repaired or constructed – an allowed use of Chapter 90 funds.

The committee has recommended that the Select Board approve the following street repair schedule for fiscal year 2010:

- Resurface East Pleasant Street from Triangle Street to North Pleasant Street.
- Resurface North Pleasant Street from East Pleasant Street to Amity Street.

### C. Sidewalks:

The committee also requested that its standing recommendations for repair of existing sidewalks and construction of high-priority new sidewalks be submitted for inclusion in stimulus package funding, as these items have been bumped from the town's

capital plan for several years running. The DPW's pavement management system informs the committee's sidewalk maintenance recommendations, as does subjective analysis of existing foot traffic and adjacent vehicle traffic, with priority given to actual and potential commuting routes.

The committee's recommendations for sidewalk repair or maintenance are as follows:

- East side of Triangle Street from Mattoon Street to Cottage Street.
- West side of Sunderland Road from Montague Road to Pine Street.
- East side of Lincoln Avenue from North Hadley Road to Fearing Street.
- Both sides of North Prospect Street from Amity Street to Hallock Street.
- South side of Strong Street from Maplewood Drive to Hills Road.

The committee's recommendations for new sidewalks include:

- East side of South East Street from Colonial Village to house #136.
- North side of East Hadley Road from South Pleasant Street to house #41.
- East side of East Pleasant Street from Village Park to Eastman Lane.
- Missing section on Old Farm Road.

#### D. Other Business:

During FY2009, members of the committee or the committee as a whole participated in public hearings on the following matters:

- On-street parking in the vicinity of the Amherst Regional High School.
- Traffic calming on Lincoln Avenue.
- Improvement of the West Street/Pomeroy Lane intersection.
- Redesign of the Big Y intersection on University Drive.

When appropriate, the committee made recommendations to the Select Board about possible courses of action relevant to these projects.

#### E. Future Business:

During FY2010, the committee will consider and, if it deems appropriate, make recommendations on the following matters in addition to its regular attention to street and sidewalk maintenance:

- Sidewalk plowing policy.
- Ice-treatment policy for streets.
- Town-wide traffic calming manual.

#### F. Members:

- Stephen Braun, 549-2697
- Michael Cann, 253-7753
- Robert Crouner, 253-6526 (chair)
- Donald George, 253-7579
- Charles Moran, 549-5767
- Vincent O'Connor, 549-0810

One seat remains unfilled. Residents interested in becoming a member of the Public Works Committee may contact any current member for more information or submit a Citizen Activity Form available at Town Hall or <<https://www.amherstma.gov/forms>>.